THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

1737 K STREET, N. W. • WASHINGTON, D. C. • EXECUTIVE 6250

BULLETIN

No. 12 December 1942

Dear Member:

THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR STATE AND LOCAL POST-WAR PLANNING has been proposed in H. R. 7782, recently introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Alfred F. Beiter of New York. Under the terms of the proposed resolution, which is an alternate to a previous bill, a sum not in excess of $75,000,000 could be advanced by the President through an appropriate Federal agency to state or local agencies for plan preparation. Requests for such assistance would be submitted to a designated appropriate Federal agency for its comments and recommendations. Funds advanced for architectural and engineering plans, specifications, examinations, surveys, and investigations relating to specific projects would be repaid to the Treasury of the United States if and when funds become available by appropriation, grant, gift, or loan to the state or local agency for the undertaking of public works and improvements so planned.

States or local agencies would be required to contribute twenty-five per cent of the cost of preparing conprehensive plans and programs, general examinations, surveys, and investigations for which Federal funds are advanced. This contribution could be in funds, services, or materials to be used in such plan preparation.

In addition to state and local advances, Congressman Beiter's Resolution would authorize the President to allot up to $25,000,000 to Federal agencies for the preparation of plans for the selection and inauguration of those public works and improvements that can assist in providing employment opportunities and demands for industrial products in the post-war period.

The employment of Federal funds in local planning has been urged by the Urban Land Institute as an essential part of its proposal for rebuilding blighted city areas.

MAYOR HOWARD W. JACKSON OF BALTIMORE HAS APPOINTED A COMMITTEE ON POST-WAR PLANNING to minimize difficulties in the readjustment of industry after the war. The organization committee consists of John D. Steele, Chairman of the City Plan Commission, F. G. Wrightson, of the Bethlehem Steel Company; and Bancroft Hill, of the Baltimore Transit Company. Twenty-one other business and civic leaders have been asked to serve on the Committee.

As an example of the type of suggestion that might emanate from the Committee, Major Jackson called attention to the policy of one company in putting $80,000 a month into a reserve for maintenance that can not be carried out now, but which will be needed when men and materials are available for it. "Industry ought to be permitted to accumulate a backlog of resources with which to readjust itself to

peace-time needs," he said. "There will be a large volume of deferred maintenance and need for retooling and re-equipment to make the fullest use of our resources to cushion the shock of readjustment and forestall the disturbed conditions in the economic field that will follow the war."

WE ARE GRIEVED TO LEARN THAT LT. CARL F. ZEIDLER HAS BEEN REPORTED LOST IN ACTION. Formerly Mayor of Milwaukee, Lieutenant Zeidler was given a leave of absence by the City on April 14 of this year when he was commissioned in the Naval Reserve. A statement issued by the Navy indicates that he was lost with all hands aboard a medium sized merchant ship, whose gun crew he commanded, when the vessel was sunk by an enemy submarine in the North Atlantic last month. Before joining the Navy, Lieutenant Zeidler was the youngest mayor of a major American city. He served on the Advisory Board of the United States Conference of Mayors, and was chairman of the Milwaukee County Council of Defense. He first became interested in the Urban Land Institute at the time the survey of downtown Milwaukee was begun, and was elected to the Board of Trustees on January 22, 1942, in Chicago.

Lieutenant Zeidler

ABOLITION OF AUTOMOBILE PARKING IN DOWNTOWN BOSTON AS A FIRE PROTECTION MEASURE has been urged by U.L.I. member Parker Webb in a letter to the Boston Herald. Mr. Webb's statement, ocassioned by the disastrous Cocoanut Grove fire, points out that present restrictions on parking in the area are inadequate and unenforceable. "Our narrow streets are almost hazards in themselves," he states, "but when these thoroughfares are further congested by automobiles parked on both sides, leaving only a narrow thoroughfare with enough room for one car to pass through, it becomes a criminal hazard. In the event of a serious fire, there might well be a serious delay before the fire department could get on the job. Most of the lives were lost in the Cocoanut Grove fire during the first twenty minutes, and our fire department officials have time after time emphasized the necessity of getting to a fire quickly."

In suggesting a general prohibition of parking on streets in the central area, Mr. Webb cited W. H. Ballard's U.L.I. report, Proposals For Downtown Boston, which made a similar recommendation, and the efforts of John C. Kiley to obtain a six months trial for a like proposal. Mr. Webb's statement now urges the Mayor to select an experienced Realtor, an executive of the Boston Elevated, and an official of the Boston Street Department to report, within three days, on an area of downtown Boston at least a mile square in which all parking of private cars should be eliminated.

THOUSANDS OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING CONTRACTS ARE BEING CANCELED due to restricted highway travel. This has prompted the Florida State Highway Department to offer its services in removing metal billboards from roadsides as an aid to the scrap salvage drive. There are many takers among sign companies with maintenance costs to pay on unproductive boards. A similar program has been proposed by the Pennsylvania Roadside Council to the State's Secretary of Highways. Other road departments will undoubtedly be called upon to render a comparable service.

THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

Conference on

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN THE POST-WAR EMERGENCY

January 29, 1943 - Mayflower Hotel - Washington, D. C.

PROGRAM

10:00 A.M. -- Chinese Room

Third Annual Meeting of the Urban Land Institute
Annual Business Session
Election of New Trustees

2:30 P.M. -- Chinese Room

General Session, Presiding, Arthur W. Binns, Philadelphia
Vice-President of the Institute

"The Rôle of Government in Urban Redevelopment"
Paul E. Stark, Madison, President of the Institute

Discussion

"Economic Soundness in the Rebuilding of Cities"
Herbert U. Nelson, Chicago, Executive Vice-President,
National Association of Real Estate Boards

Discussion

7:00 P.M. -- East Room

Dinner (Informal Dress) President Stark presiding

"Concepts of Post-War Planning"
Hugh Potter, Houston
National Association of Home Builders

RELAXATION OF ZONING PROVISIONS TO FURTHER THE HOMES USE PROGRAM is having its principal effect on multiple-family residence districts, according to the Division of Urban Studies of the National Housing Agency. While some communities are considering temporary adjustments to permit a greater intensity of use in single-family residence areas, recognizing the war housing obligation of these districts, there appears to be a general feeling that multiple-family zones are the logical areas for providing additional accomodations for war workers. In general these areas are more fully equipped with public transportation facilities and municipal services. Many of them contain large single-family residences which have been abandoned in the movement of population to outlying residential areas, as well as commercial and industrial structures that can be readily converted to war time dwelling purposes.

Reports received by the Division of Urban Studies from seventy communities reveal only five amendments to zoning ordinances, with an additional five amendments in process of enactment. The cities show a preference for granting variances, or even countenancing violations, in adjusting to more intensive use of existing houses. Several communities reported that building codes, with requirements for specified forms of construction and materials, standards of room size, window openings, and similar stipulations, constitute more formidable obstacles than zoning provisions to the homes use program.

CORRECTION: In the last line on page two of Bulletin No. 11, the term "overall rent" should have read "overall return."

UNUSED LAND WITHIN THE CITY OF ST. PAUL is being analyzed with a view to making it as attractive as outlying areas for post-war development. This work is being done by the United Civic Council, an organization of delegates from the city's various civic groups, recently established by Mayor John T. McDonough. Acting as a citizens' agency to anticipate the post-war problems of St. Paul, the Council is making special studies for zoning revision, improved building regulations, public transportation needs, highway approaches, parking terminals, improved assessment methods, problems of the central business district, the local tax structure, the city's blighted districts, and the metropolitan area.

Restrictions on construction and public works requiring critical materials permit the City to use its technical staff now in the preparation of plans and estimates for a post-war improvement program.

Sincerely yours,

Clark T. Stuart

Director

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The Urban Land Institute Bulletin

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